Ford commercialization of JFK assassination (Glaser Ford Film on JFK Slaying, SFChron 5/5/75) coinciding with anti-Kennedy campaign by executive agencies and Rockefeller Commission. HW 6/2/75

Long before the current interest in the CIA and the investigation of it there were anti-Democrat overtones to the Watergate fightback, especiall tbe Republican leaks,as the falsehood that Hunt engaged in domestic intelligence for LBJ.

Once the CIA investigations were certain and especially after the Rockefeller Commission was appointed and more, once the partisan commission was accepted by the press, which clearly signalled its expectable reaction to the very dirty, the anti-Democrat and especially the anti-Kennedy character was certain and soon very clear. It remains without any editorial treatment of which I am aware.

Non-Democrat needs cpincide. The agencies have t emselves to defend and they can't defend from even the mildest inquiry except by blaming others, the Nurenburg defense, orders. Meanwhile, once the nuts made dramatic issues of the wrong and inaccurate JFK stuff, they had set up a real diversion for those in need of defense. This thus also came to include Ford more directly because he was a member of the Warren Commission.

If without knowing I were to guess who came up with the idea of the Nixonian Belin to run the new commission I'd guess Stiles, who had to work with someone on the WCstaff more closely than others. Belin's psychopathy on the subject and the ultra Ford/Stiles view plus the commercial ambition made this closeness a probability. Of the other staff rightOwingers, like Liebeler, the probability seems lower because they are different than Belin. Specter was not that right and although Ball was part of the Ball-Belin framing/ suppression, he is a Democrat.

Whether or not there was the expectation of WC overtones and possibilities in the work of the Rock. Com. Belin's character made him a natural, as did his political views.

And once the self-seekers made the phoney issue, Belin had his natural situation. That also coincided with the interest and needs of the CIA (less and sometimes against those of the FBI). However, it is likely that no investigation of any character of the CIA could have avoided the assassination question, broad sense, not domestic. This made the JFK unavoidable, as at least the agencies would have recognized.

This long and detailed Glaser account does not date the beginning of the negotiations for the movie on Portrait of the Assassin. Mu hunch is that it was independent and began as soon as Stile was settled down in the WH. The character of the book, which he also did not wrie, according to Lonnie Hudkins, is wretchedly commercial and irresponsible. The real-estate mind in a position to do the commercial, which the tunnel vision would show to be beneficial to Ford politically, would naturally do the commercial. It is not safe to assume that this project began with the notion that Ford's share would go to charity, the version of the Glaser piece. I suspect it never occurred to this gang that there could be criticism. It may have that any such attention would be embarrassing to the Kennedys and the Democrats.

I think it is safe to assume that with what the agencies knew they would need and need to face and what they knew about and had on Ford that they could leak they did let Ford know the blame they could place on other Presidents and how they in the "national" need would be able to if not have to defend themselves. Thus knew there could be the appearance of non-partisanship while there would be the actuality of anti-Kennedy focus of the defense.

The nuts and self-seekers needed no connections with any agencies to comport wit the actualities of the situation.

The Belin/Rockefeller and the agencies' record shows full exploitation of a complascent press with these potentials with the political drives of the various earlier administrations lending themselves to this (Ike, JFK=Cuba;LBJ,RMN=VN. It is probable that the CIA defense against its domestic transcgressions will be laid to LBJ's problem with anti-war protesters, the line initiated by Hunt and without doubt false as it relates to the time of the beginning.

The JFK administration's problems with its attitude toward Cuba and Cuba's defense vs. US adventures, whether or not of JFK's inspiration, lends itself naturally to the CIA's allegation that JFK ordered what it did. I not only doubt this but at some stages it was in violation of JFK's policies, viz after Cuba missle crisis. Earlier, whether or not there was JFK pressure to assassinate Castro, the efforts to oust him will look like this.

Glaser's quotes of Ford closer ones makes no sense, except that Stiles can be believed to believe what makes no sense. Buchen's reaction that Ford share would go to charity could be an effort to undo the hamr once the movie deal negotiations were public and the six-figure yield was known.

That "it might be important to set the record straight," Buchen's statement, "in view of all these weird conspuracy theories, and bring back to public consciousness how carefully the Warren Commission built up the evidence" is irrational, even for one of his views. Ford by then had already telegraphed his expectation that at least part of the official story would come apart. The Ford book, which also postulates a "weird conspiracy theory, the one taken up currently, that Castro offed JFK, is hardly the right way, after the lapse of more than 11 years and all the developments and all the new questions to answer, to "set the record straight." Rather would it make Ford vulnerable to critifcism and remind that he shares responsibility for the failings of the WC, perhaps not to the Ford/Stiles mind.

With Stiles to serve as consultant, to review each day's footage "to make sure it was faithful to the book" (does not say WR)the certainty is that faithfulness to fact and a solid representation of the WC's findings is not the major Ford consideration. If this were the consultant would be a Belin or someone like him, one who knew what the WR said not one who ripped it off as he saw commercial interest to dictate.

On MGM's side commercialism is overt and explicit in producer Sheldon Davis' comment,"the fact that a president wrote it has a great deal of avlue." Even Stiles made no effort to hide this, if the opening of the quote is nonses to all minds save those like his:"We want to do a terribly honest and exciting job. Down the line they cou,d make some really nice money."

How terribly exciting a flop book could be ten years after it flopped is obvious. It can't be and its prospects are dimmed by the reduced credibility of the WR and thus the flop., had it been a good book it today would be dated. The book is a nothing. The commercialism works both ways. Ford needs help on the WC record he made.

I have seen no report that says the deal began with the assumption the film would not be shown until after the election. This gang could have conceived it as an election ploy. Public attention could have required the delay until after the election as it could have impelled saying the money would go to charity. Ford's, not Stiles'.

Events will overtake this commercialization as they will CBS' supposed contract for the TV rights and CBS' own concept of their announced November assassination special. As of last week it had been recast into the form of the Newsweek attack on some of the critics and hoked-up defense of the WR. Even the Rock. Com. report will make this impossible because Ford's now most urgent need is exculpation from responsibility for the flaws in the WR that now can no longer be hidden. The odd thing is the reversal of effect from the campaign to make it appear (falsely, I'm sure) that the JFK assassination was a kickback from a JFK plot against Castro. It now cannot be hidden that the Commission did not really consider conspiracies, that Ford therefore did not, and for this there is no choice but agency admission that they did not tell the WCm read Ford. If there is no attention to any other evidence, this can now neither be ignored nor written around completely.

In the end I doubt the Rock. Com. will be able to make a probative case the JFK and/or RFK really plotted against Castro. They'll have "contingency planning" to refer to but little more. Even Lansdale had to withdraw his charges. I saw nothing in the papers on this but the very next day CBS TV news did carry the retraction.

There has in all the news been almost no mention of the FBI. The Rock. Com. was not to have "investigated" this but the Chrcuh committee is. This means that before the election there remains the possibility that Ford can be hurt. It also means that despite the Belin mentality the Rock. Com. may recognize that it has to look ahead to this possibility or despite the probability of initial acceptance within a short time ti will lack credibility and if it is a political enough report it will be politically attacked where it might not have been doctrinally. The Democrats might fall in line behind the CIA but they will not fall in line for self-assassination.

Selection of a Friday, more a summertime Friday, for the release of the Rock. report is not accidental. It means that a large volume will have to be read and understood before any comment can be solicited. This in itself will be impossible. It also means - more if release is for pm papers - that the initial accounts will have to be of what the report says, not of any adverse comment on it. It means also that this will have the probability of continuing until not earlier than pm paper time on the west coast, am time Tuesday on the east. It may also mean that intial comment or comeback may be limited to what appears in the papers and thus may not be able to address what may be most vulnerbale in the report.

Like everything else, this has been stage managed.

The newsmagazines will be limited to the official report and leaks, which will be from it. For what the Rock. Com. would consider adwquate coverage they may require advance copies. If the practise of the past is follwed, there may be advance page proofs for some of the press.

It seems that Friday release is the most difficult for the newsmagazines, whic appear Mondays, as I recall.

To put this another way. Friday selected so far in advance for release of a report of this kind inevitably means the desire is to protect it from scrutiny to the degree possible and to avoid criticism as much as possible.

There were no leaks for the weekend papers.

Whether this means the propagandists have shot their bolt or they are holding back what they consider most useful for their purposes the week will show.

If it is something more, I am inclined to believe it will also be new because I think the p ossibilities of coming up with more involving the Kennedys is not good unless it is fabricated. With Lansdale backfiring, there may be discouragement to other and new ploys of this kind.

Even Schorr had nothing new for the CBS AM TV news today. With nothing new, CBS still had him on a segment. The 8 a.m. NBC TV news had no mention of the subject.

Whether or not there is significance, I note the apparent disappearance of Ford's press secretary from the news. I have heard and seen no mention of Ron Nessen for some time.

There is a politcal, non-party political, aspect that seems to have attracted no attention and no commentaries of which I am aware.

The one certainty is that there will have to be consideration of real changes in the agencies like CIA and FBI. It is not merely because they are under criticism. I do not believe that criticism alone would impel changes.

They are anti-democratic. This means that those who are opposed to anti-democratic police-type agencies will want changes and there will be a disposition to at least appear to make these changes. Admissions of wrongdoing can t be avoided. If they are blamed on the ultimate authority they will remain admissions of wrongdoing and we have the national pretense that the nation and its rulers oppose wrongdoing. (For all the world as though all rules do not require it.)

Simultaneously and without being noted, there is this persistent drive toward more, not less, authoritarianism. This require more police and intelligence effeciency and public acceptability. In turn this requires making those changes that can make for more effeciency.

These changes may well be touted as liberal, as Levi pretends while doing the opposite.

The Rock. report may be useful to this end. It may be built in, that is, in its need to pretend to expose and call for reform it may well come up with a formula that will seem to be reformist but will actually direct toward greater authoritarianism. This will not require that Kelley go and it need not mean Colby's departure because he has already alleged he has started changes and ordered the end of the wrongs.

However, the departure of either or both would have no real meaning except that Kelley is a smoother Hoover and has been accepted. The next one might not be, so I think the chances are that he will stay and all the wrongs attributed to the FBI by the Church committee will be Hoover-era. (CIA's to before Colby.)